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"ON THE CIA'S BACK"

ARTHUR W. ARUNDEL (President, WAVA): "One of the more fashionable new national pastimes has in recent years become what can be called 'CIA baiting.' This is for the proposition whereby whenever anything bad happens in our foreign operations which can't be entirely understood, then charge it up to the bungling of the Central Intelligence Agency.

"It is rather tragic since these charges -- always good news copy -- are characteristically spawned in the crass ignorance of publicity hunters against whom this top level intelligence agency cannot and indeed should not defend itself. This has come up again with proposals to set up a congressional watchdog committee over the CIA -- a move which simply fails to recognize the competence of House and Senate members already assigned to quietly oversee the agency.

"A grim irony of the sporadic, but hard-hitting attacks on the CIA is that the Russian secret police runs a special bureau in Moscow, whose task it is to do exactly this job -- discredit the American Intelligence Agency both overseas and in this country in order to force limitations on its operations.

"What must be accepted by the responsible press and legislative branch is that for every Bay of Pigs failure, the CIA probably has a thousand smaller and some larger successes -- if we knew what these were, then the CIA would not be doing its job -- indeed could not do its job.

"The overriding fact is that over the past 18 years the Central Intelligence Agency has pulled together probably the single toughest, most brilliant and dedicated group of people in any U. S. government agency. Uniquely, they work without recognition of achievement even from their families, and often at immense personal risk. There are few rewards, no White House award ceremonies to recognize great success.

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"This is not to excuse failure, but simply to acknowledge the nature of CIA's work, the ultimate demand for silence and to grant confidence in the President to be the best judge of the Agency's effectiveness. No one's interest but that of the opposition is going to be served by new Congressional watchdog groups. Let CIA alone to concentrate on its job."